




IDAHO COMMISSION ON AGING

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C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor
Kim Wherry Toryanski, Administrator

TRANSMITTAL # **2**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 26, 2008
TO: Idaho Workforce Development Council
FROM:  Kim Wherry Toryanski, Administrator
RE: State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan

ACTION REQUESTED: Review and Solicitation of Comments regarding the Idaho State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan.

Background Information

The Idaho Commission on Aging was designated by the Governor as the administrative entity for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in 1978. The SCSEP Program is authorized by Title V of the Older Americans Act. The Idaho Commission on Aging (ICOA) is also the state agency designated to administer all programs under the Older Americans Act.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) was re-authorized by Congress in late 2006. The re-authorized OAA contains language providing that the Governor of each State/or his designee submit a State Plan that includes a four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community services and other authorized activities for eligible individuals under the SCSEP. The language is found at Section 503 of the 2006 OAA Amendments, Public Law 109-365, October 17, 2006.

The U.S. Department of Labor encourages the Governor to include a broad array of partners and stakeholders, such as the State Workforce Development Council, in the development of the plan.

Plan Purpose

The purpose of the plan is to foster both short-term and long-term coordination among the national and state SCSEP grantee and subrecipients operating within the State and to facilitate the efforts of key stakeholders, including State Boards under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to work collaboratively to accomplish the SCSEP's goals. In

Our vision is to ensure that all Idahoans retain their autonomy to determine their own life course as they age.

addition, the new State Plan requirements emphasize the importance of increasing partnerships among grantees with other programs, initiatives and entities operating within the state. The State Plan is also intended to focus program resources where there is the greatest need relative to participants, host agencies and geographic areas.

Idaho's Plan Development and Four Year Strategy

Idaho's four-year strategy places heavy emphasis on the role of SCSEP relative to other workforce development programs and initiatives in Idaho as well as other programs and partners serving older workers.

The Plan is based largely on (a) Idaho's decision to apply for participation in the National Governors Association's (NGA) Policy Academy on engaging older individuals in employment and community service and (b) input received from an interdisciplinary group of Idaho state leaders and SCSEP grantees.

Policy Academy on Older Worker Employment and Community Service

The NGA Center for Best Practices invited states to apply for a Policy Academy on developing state strategies to increase the proportion of seniors who are employed and who volunteer in substantive community service activities.

The NGA Policy Academy is an intensive form of technical assistance that brings together influential state policymakers with peers from other states and national experts to develop state specific responses to a public policy issue. Participants in the Policy Academy work through a rigorous team-based process to develop strategies to strengthen the following objectives:

- Identify the needs of the labor market to fully engage older adults in employment and community service activities.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of state policies that affect older adults who choose to remain in or reconnect to the labor market.
- Initiate policy changes based on the labor market needs identified and the review of state policies.
- Develop new information tools; and
- Promote existing systems that connect older adults to employment and community service opportunities.
- Enhance training and educational opportunities for older workers.

States selected to participate receive significant technical assistance in:

- Reaching consensus on priorities.
- Identifying outcomes that define success in addressing priorities.
- Formulating a sustainable plan to achieve outcomes.

- Developing ways to measure progress.
- Plan Implementation.

In January, 2008, the ICOA asked the State Workforce Council (1) to participate in the NGA Policy Academy as a Workforce Development Council project, (2) and solicited suggestions (content and process) for Idaho's Policy Academy application. Idaho SCSEP staff prepared a draft application for Council review. The State Workforce Council unanimously endorsed the request for Policy Academy participation. All parties were asked to submit comments, suggestions and additions by February 1, 2008.

ICOA SCSEP staff prepared a final application for review by the ICOA Administrator, Idaho Department of Labor Administrator and Workforce Policy Advisor, and the Office of the Governor. The application was submitted to the National Governor's Association by Governor Otter on June 5, 2008.

Governor Otter was informed on June 19, 2008 that Idaho and five other states were selected for Policy Academy participation. The following are key excerpts from Idaho's proposed plan:

Idaho's Policy Academy Objective: Advance the employment, education and training, and community service of older Idahoans.

The Policy Academy's purpose is consistent with the mission and goals of the Governor's Workforce Development Council as articulated in the following excerpts."

Goal of State Workforce Council: Increase the size and skills of the Idaho workforce.

Applicable Governor's Workforce Development Council Objectives

- Optimize participation of the untapped labor pool using various strategies to retain older workers and engage people with disabilities, offenders, and the educationally and economically disadvantaged.
- Encourage use of workplace flexibility to attract and retain a workforce.
- Identify and disseminate strategies that retain productive, mature workers and increase their technology skills.
- Provide opportunities for and encourage life-long skill development for Idaho's current and transitional workforce."

Preliminary Strategies to Meet Idaho Objectives

- Develop an awareness campaign designed to increase general public and employer awareness of the value of older workers (paid and unpaid).
- Develop a model to tap the hidden labor force of older individuals interested in returning to the labor force.
- Conduct a review of existing retirement policies that penalize individuals who want to work beyond traditional retirement age or return to work after retirement.

- Identify and disseminate strategies to retain productive older workers with particular emphasis on the critical role of workplace flexibility in expanding the pool of available workers contributing to the competitiveness of Idaho's industries.
- Explore and encourage the implementation of Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs) in Idaho as a vehicle to increase education and training opportunities. *LiLAs are employer-matched, portable educational accounts that adult workers can use to finance continued education and training.*
- Increase the use of older volunteers in the educational and aging services sectors."

Input received from the Interdisciplinary Team: Additional Plan Goals

ICOA organized a planning meeting of key organizations interested in older worker issues to discuss goals and objectives in preparation for the State of Idaho Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan in April, 2008.

Interdisciplinary representation included the Director of Adult Education and GED Services for the Idaho State Department of Education, the Workforce Policy Advisor for the Idaho Department of Labor, the Idaho Director of Veterans' Employment and Training Services for the U. S. Department of Labor, State Director for the Idaho Disability Navigator Program, Regional and State leadership for Experience Works, and the ICOA Statewide Older Worker Coordinator.

Coordination goals identified:

- Develop model to tap hidden labor pool of older workers.
- Increase employer awareness of the workplace value of older workers.
- Increase computer literacy opportunities for SCSEP participants.
- Collaborate with Experience Works to assure that SCSEP resources are equitably distributed throughout Idaho based on the location of the eligible SCSEP population.
- Assure that Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) content appropriately reflects relationships and issues germane to SCSEP coordination with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Idaho's One-Stop Career system.
- Strengthen the referral mechanisms between SCSEP grantees and the Area Agencies on Aging in order to broaden the range of services and resources available to SCSEP enrollees and their families.
- Increase communication between SCSEP grantees operating within Idaho on issues of shared interest; specifically (1) implementation of the new SCSEP regulations and associated performance measures; (2) training opportunities for SCSEP participants; and (3) marketing the value of the older worker, i.e. the "Older Worker Prime Time Awards."
- Increase the number of SCSEP enrollees stationed in Idaho's One-Stop Career Centers for the purpose of greeting and assisting clientele in the Resource Center.

- Advocate for the establishment of service objectives and performance measures for rural areas served by Title V of the Older Americans Act that are based on the respective rural economies and labor market information.
- Increase use of 211 System for information and recruitment of SCSEP Participants.

The Interdisciplinary Team identified the need to (1) develop a model to tap the hidden labor pool of older individuals who need and want to return to work and (2) increase employer awareness of the workplace value of older workers as priorities.

Strategies to address the priorities:

- Collaboratively plan and conduct a Baby Boomer Job Fair in Southwest Idaho.
- Modify the Job Fair model for replication in other Idaho regions based on the Southwest Idaho 2008 Job Fair experience.
- Conduct Baby Boomer job fairs in each Planning and Service Area (PSA).

Projected Changes in Idaho's Demographics, Economy and Labor Market

Unprecedented Record of Low Unemployment in Idaho

The overall rate of unemployment in Idaho in April 2008 was 3.1%. There are parts of Idaho where the rate is even lower, such as Idaho Falls where the rate is 2.1%. April's rate was 1.9 percentage points below the national rate of 5% and the 79th month that Idaho's rate has been below the national rate. It is generally accepted by most labor economists that an unemployment rate of approximately 5% is full employment. The remaining 5% represents those that are unemployable with their current skill sets."

Consequently, there are more positions available within the current labor market in Idaho than qualified applicants to fill them. Idaho's unemployment rate has been under 4% for 35 months in a row, as it stands below the national rate where it has remained since October 2001. While such low unemployment is an enviable predicament, it poses challenges in assuring the continued availability of a qualified workforce—a critical factor in persuading expanding companies to locate in Idaho. In fact, the low unemployment rate in Idaho presents a picture to prospective employers intending to relocate to Idaho of a current worker shortage, as well as a picture of future worker shortages occurring as the "Baby Boomers" retire, if no action is taken by the state."

A Picture of Idaho's Aging Workforce

The challenge is compounded by the large wave of "Baby Boomers" (born 1946 to 1964) who are expected to leave the workforce over the next few decades. If "Baby Boomers" replicate the retirement behavior of previous generations, the services of many highly skilled,

experienced workers will be lost. In view of the baby dearth that followed the “Baby Boom,” there will not be enough new workers to replace them, as the senior population grows. The impact will be more significant if the “Baby Boomers” retire without realizing further opportunities to contribute. Additionally, the “Baby Boomer” generation placed a greater emphasis on education and literacy than subsequent generations, so there will likely also be a lack of qualified employees.”

Senior Employment Services Coordination Framework

Participation of Aging Representatives on Governor's State Workforce Development Council

The Administrator of the Idaho Commission on Aging is a member of the Idaho State Workforce Development Council.

The lead staff for the State Workforce Development Council is the Special Assistant to Governor Otter. The Special Assistant to the Governor is supported by an interagency staff team comprised of the key staff of State Workforce Development agencies. ICOA's Older Worker Coordinator serves as the aging representative on the Workforce Development Council staff team.

Local Level Coordination Framework: Service Providers and One-Stop Operator Status

Area I – North Idaho	Idaho Department of Labor – State SCSEP Program Operator serving Area I is also the program operator for the WIA and Dislocated Worker Program.
Area II – North Central Idaho	Idaho Department of Labor – State SCSEP Program Operator serving Area II is also the program operator for the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.
Area III – Southwest Idaho	Idaho Department of Labor – State SCSEP Program Operator serving Area III is also the program operator for the WIA and Dislocated Worker Program.
Area IV – South Central Idaho	College of Southern Idaho/Area Agency on Aging – State SCSEP Program Operator. Older Worker staff is co-located full-time in the Regional One-Stop Career Center. Idaho Representative for Experience Works, Inc. is a member of the Area IV Area Agency on Aging
Area V – Southeast Idaho	Idaho Department of Labor – State SCSEP Program Operator serving Area V is also the program operator for the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.

Area VI – Eastern Idaho

Idaho Department of Labor – State SCSEP Program Operator serving Area VI is also the program operator for the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.

Statewide

Experience Works, Inc. – the national SCSEP Program Operator is located in Areas I, III and IV.

Involvement of Organizations and Individuals and the Solicitation of Public Comments

To avoid duplication of effort, ICOA will present the entire planning process for all aging services as an integrated whole via Idaho's State Plan on Aging and existing public participation processes.

The Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan is incorporated into the Idaho State Plan on Aging (Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended (OAA)). The State OAA Plan is a four-year plan that may be amended each year. The same public participation processes used for Idaho's State Plan on Aging are, therefore, used for the Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan.

A written summary of the State Coordination Plan is also prepared for the State Workforce Council and distributed to local elected officials, labor organizations, economic development entities, community action agencies, employers, employment and training organizations, state partner agencies and other interested parties who are on the Idaho State Workforce Development Council mailing list.

The State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan will also be available (1) on the ICOA web site and at (2) each Area Agency on Aging. The Plan includes the distribution of authorized positions by county.

The full State Plan and all attachments are also available upon request from the ICOA.

Any comments should be submitted to:

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